United Nations S/2011/332

Security Council

Distr.: General
31 May 2011

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus

I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus covers developments from 21 November 2010 to 20 May 2011 and brings up to date, since the issuance of my previous report (S/2010/605), on 26 November 2010, the record of activities carried out by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 1953 (2010). The activities of my mission of good offices in Cyprus were covered most recently in my report dated 4 March 2011 (S/2011/112).

2. As at 30 April, the strength of the military component stood at 858 for all ranks and the strength of the police component stood at 65 (see annex).

II. Activities of the Force

3. UNFICYP aims first and foremost to prevent a recurrence of fighting and to contribute to the maintenance of law and order and a return to normal conditions. Its mandate requires reconciling, as far as possible, security considerations and the maintenance of the military status quo while allowing Cypriots, who live and work in the buffer zone, to pursue civilian activities and enjoy full and productive lives. When successful, such an approach builds confidence between the communities and contributes to the overall United Nations effort in support of the peace process.

A. Prevention of a recurrence of fighting and the maintenance of the military status quo

4. During the reporting period, UNFICYP continued to maintain the integrity and stability of the buffer zone. There was a further decrease in the number of military violations committed by the National Guard and the Turkish forces in comparison with the previous reporting period. Cooperation from both opposing forces and the working relationship with the respective chains of command was positive.

5. There was no progress in advancing the consideration of military confidence-building measures. While the National Guard has worked with UNFICYP on

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assessing the proposals, as I have previously reported, UNFICYP still awaits concrete steps from the Turkish forces/Turkish Cypriot security forces. The mission remains committed to reducing tension and the military presence in the buffer zone through the implementation of such measures as the unmanning and/or closing of observation posts where opposing troops are in close proximity. Progress in this direction, however, requires support from both sides.

6. The opposing forces did not carry out any major exercises during the reporting period. Routine exercises associated with the annual rotation of troops continued. The opposing forces occasionally employed low-level measures that provoked a reaction from the other side. These occurred mostly in areas around Nicosia, where the opposing forces are in close proximity to each other, and were predominantly related to poor discipline. Since 30 April, the Turkish forces have used spotlights to illuminate areas surrounding five observation posts in the buffer zone around the Kokkina/Erenköy pocket. On each occasion and to the extent possible, UNFICYP intervened to ensure that such incidents did not escalate. Both opposing forces continued to report alleged violations committed by the other side to UNFICYP; the number of such allegations decreased in comparison with previous reporting periods.

7. Previously reported military positions established by both opposing forces in the Dherinia area that violate the status quo remain in place. The Turkish forces retained the checkpoint in the Laroujina pocket; they also conducted regular inspections of the liaison post at Strovilia and repeatedly overmanned the position in violation of the military status quo. The United Nations holds the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha.

B. Demining activity in the buffer zone

8. On 4 December, the Mine Action Centre in Cypress was called upon to rescue a Greek Cypriot firefighting team, which had inadvertently entered a mined area in the north and set off an anti-tank mine while fighting a fire in the western part of the buffer zone. The Mine Action Centre, supported by UNFICYP, successfully extracted the persons and vehicles without harm or injury.

9. The Mine Action Centre completed the clearance of the three remaining mined areas that had been released to UNFICYP. However, the sides continue to withhold access to the four remaining mined areas in the buffer zone, namely, one located south of Varosha under the control of the Turkish forces and three in the Laroujina pocket under the control of the National Guard. At the same time, no agreement was reached with the Turkish forces or the National Guard to extend demining operations to areas outside the buffer zone.

10. Under these circumstances, demining in Cyprus ceased in January 2011. My Special Representative subsequently wrote to the representatives of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders reiterating the position of the Security Council, which looked forward to the clearance of the remaining minefields and urged the parties to agree to extend the operation beyond the buffer zone (see resolution 1953 (2010)). However, the parties have made no progress to date in releasing the remaining minefields for clearance.

C. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

11. Civilian activities in the buffer zone, including housing construction, farming, animal husbandry and other commercial ventures, increased during the reporting period. Since these activities require permits from UNFICYP, the mission intensified its outreach activities in villages all along the buffer zone to explain procedures and process applications for the benefit of both communities. UNFICYP routinely facilitates the provision of basic services and the maintenance of essential infrastructure in the buffer zone, such as roads, waterways and electricity supply, thereby enabling greater access to agricultural land. During the reporting period, UNFICYP authorized 24 civilian projects and activities out of 27 applications received.

12. The increase in civilian activities was accompanied by an increase in incidents caused by civilians, including passive resistance and belligerence; contesting, and often disregarding, UNFICYP procedures for authorizing civilian construction projects by both private individuals and companies, at times supported by local authorities; repeated blocking of patrol tracks; and disregard of UNFICYP requests to vacate the buffer zone. Three judicial cases resulting from such incidents in the south involving Greek Cypriots have yet to be heard by the courts.

13. Beyond the buffer zone, an important aspect of the mission's mandate is to address day-to-day issues arising from the division of the island for Greek Cypriots and Maronites residing in the north and Turkish Cypriots residing in the south. During the reporting period, UNFICYP facilitated 13 religious and commemorative events, involving some 3,630 individuals, which were either held in or required crossing of the buffer zone. UNFICYP also assisted in addressing legal and humanitarian concerns resulting from arrests and detentions of Turkish Cypriots in the south and Greek Cypriots in the north. UNFICYP visited five Turkish Cypriots imprisoned in the south, attended their court hearings and facilitated visits by family members. One Greek Cypriot arrested in the north was also visited in detention. However, contrary to long-established practice, the Turkish Cypriot authorities prevented UNFICYP from attending the related court hearing.

14. UNFICYP continued to deliver weekly humanitarian assistance to 356 Greek Cypriots and 126 Maronites in the north and to facilitate solutions for their medical and health-care needs. It also continued to assist Turkish Cypriots living in the south by liaising with local authorities in their efforts to provide welfare services, including medical care and education. In Limassol and Paphos, it continued to work with the local authorities and community representatives to strengthen support mechanisms for vulnerable members of the Turkish Cypriot community in educational and social areas.

15. With respect to educational issues, the elementary and secondary Greek Cypriot schools in the Karpas peninsula continued to function, assisted by UNFICYP through the delivery of school textbooks and the appointment of teachers, while the Turkish Cypriot side continued to raise the lack of a Turkish language primary school in Limassol as a cause for concern. During the previous reporting period, eight Maronites and one Greek Cypriot asked UNFICYP to convey their request to reside permanently in the north. These requests remain under consideration by the Turkish Cypriot authorities.

16. Certain incidents contributed to rising tensions between the two communities and required UNFICYP intervention and mediation. On 21 December 2010, a European club basketball match in south Nicosia between a visiting Turkish team and a Greek Cypriot team was marred by acts of hooliganism by Greek Cypriot fans against the Turkish team players. Cyprus police intervened decisively at the stadium and provided protection to the team until its departure. Following Turkish Cypriot representations on behalf of the Turkish team, UNFICYP engaged in mediation at the operational and political levels to defuse the situation. The incident was subsequently condemned by both sides.

17. On 25 December 2010, Turkish Cypriot police interrupted a Christmas service for the Greek Cypriot residents in the Karpas peninsula. On 17 March, Turkish Cypriot authorities confiscated 204 religious books, which the Greek Cypriot side had sought to transport to the north. In both instances, UNFICYP made representations to the Turkish Cypriot authorities, who defended their actions on the basis that, in each case, the long-standing authorization procedures had not been followed. In March, the Turkish Cypriot authorities revised existing procedures for Greek Cypriots to obtain permission for religious observances at places of worship in the north. While the new procedures appear to address some of the concerns of the Greek Cypriot community, some administrative control over observances remains.

18. UNFICYP continued to support initiatives, in particular at the level of civil society, that foster bicommunal cooperation, a key component of the reconciliation process. To that end, the mission facilitated more than 100 bicommunal events, with the participation of more than 6,300 people, in cooperation with international and local partners. The events, including regular meetings between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political party leaders and representatives under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia, were held at the Ledra Palace Hotel and other locations in the buffer zone.

19. In addition, UNFICYP supported a variety of bicommunal projects by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its local partners by allowing access to and the use of certain sensitive areas of the buffer zone. Two UNDP-supported projects are of particular note. In the old town of Nicosia, UNFICYP supported a European Union-funded project led by the two Nicosia municipalities on the stabilization of buildings at the Ledra Street/Lokmaçı crossing. UNFICYP also supported the launch on 6 May of the Home for Cooperation, a new facility established between the Ledra Palace Hotel crossing points, with the aim of facilitating bicommunal cooperation on issues of education and research. The launching ceremony was attended by Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, Demetris Christofias and Derviş Eroğlu.

20. UNFICYP maintained efforts to build confidence between the two communities in Pyla, the only mixed village in the buffer zone. With a view to improving the long-standing arrangements in the village, UNFICYP facilitated regular meetings to enable local community representatives to air issues of concern and find agreed solutions. On 10 April, the Turkish Cypriot village of Louroujina and the Greek Cypriot community of Athienou held a family event in the buffer zone, with UNFICYP support. UNFICYP will continue to explore further such initiatives on the ground.

21. UNFICYP police assisted in and facilitated a number of investigations by the respective police services. During the reporting period, there were 16 reported cases of theft or attempted theft, 1 case of threatening and indecent behaviour towards UNFICYP personnel, 5 cases of criminal damage or vandalism, 1 case of arson, 1 case of assault and 1 case of passing fraudulent cheques in the buffer zone. In March, UNFICYP police and military components helped to defuse tension in the village of Pyla and supported the transfer to Larnaca by Cyprus police of a group of Palestinian refugees, who had staged a protest against alleged unfair treatment regarding welfare issues.

22. UNFICYP continued to maintain and foster good working relationships with the police services on both sides. Daily communication helps to further enhance cooperation and to address operational difficulties within the buffer zone. In accordance with the leaders' agreement upon the opening of the Limnitis/Yeşilırmak crossing in October 2010, the United Nations police continued to escort convoys with Turkish Cypriot civilians and humanitarian supplies through the buffer zone to Kokkina/Erenköy.

23. The joint communications room, where UNFICYP has a permanent presence, complements the existing liaison system. Both sides demonstrated a willingness to cooperate and assist each other by exchanging information in response to requests, covering a broad spectrum of such crime-related issues as suspected abduction, details of apprehended persons, illegal drugs and stolen property.

24. The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters continued to meet on a regular basis under the facilitation of the United Nations police. In April, the Committee organized a joint seminar in cooperation with UNFICYP on the use of illegal drugs, which was attended by students and teachers from both communities. Facilitated by UNFICYP, the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage and its advisory board continued to plan for the preservation, protection and restoration of immovable cultural heritage throughout the island. As a result of an €800,000 project funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP, important steps towards developing an island-wide cultural heritage inventory were taken.

25. UNFICYP facilitated four meetings of the Committee on Crossings as well as several site visits carried out separately by the respective teams to different locations in the buffer zone where further crossings could be opened. As evidenced by the extensive research and consultations, both sides demonstrated constructive engagement and goodwill at the meetings. As a result, all parties are positively disposed to a crossing south of Apliki/Aplıç in the Lefka/Lefke area. The Greek Cypriot side also seeks a crossing to the east and south-east of Nicosia, linking the capital to Larnaca by means of the old road.

26. During the period from 21 November 2010 to 7 May 2011, UNFICYP recorded more than 778,000 official crossings through the buffer zone, including almost 40,000 at Limnitis/Yeşilırmak. During the period between November 2010 and May 2011, goods worth approximately €742,581 crossed from the south to the north, and goods worth approximately €3,106,577 crossed in the opposite direction, which is similar to the levels reported for the same period in 2010.

27. Restrictions imposed upon United Nations staff members of Greek Cypriot origin seeking to undertake their duties in the north, noted in previous reports, continued.

III. Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus

28. During the reporting period, the Committee on Missing Persons continued to carry forward its bicommunal project on the exhumation, identification and return of remains of missing persons. By May 2011, the remains of nearly 800 individuals had been exhumed on both sides of the island by the Committee's bicommunal teams of archaeologists. The remains of 463 missing persons had undergone examination at the Committee's bicommunal anthropological laboratory in the United Nations Protected Area in Nicosia. Following the genetic analysis of 1,280 samples by a bicommunal team of scientists at the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics, the remains of 278 individuals have been returned to their respective families to date, including 15 during the reporting period. During the reporting period, the Committee's access to military areas in the north remained circumscribed.

IV. Financial and administrative aspects

29. As indicated in my previous report, the General Assembly, by its resolution 64/274, appropriated the amount of $56.3 million for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011, inclusive of the voluntary contribution of one third of the net cost of the Force, equivalent to $18.9 million, from the Government of Cyprus, and the voluntary contribution of $6.5 million from the Government of Greece. I invite other countries and organizations to do likewise, with a view to reducing the portion of the cost of UNFICYP covered by assessed contributions.

30. My proposed budget for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 (A/65/706), which amounts to $55.7 million, is being considered by the General Assembly at the second part of its resumed sixty-fifth session.

31. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNFICYP for a further period of six months, the cost of maintaining the Force would be limited to the amount approved by the General Assembly.

32. As at 30 April 2011, the total outstanding assessed contributions to the special account for UNFICYP for the period from 16 June 1993 to 30 April 2011 amounted to $17.9 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to $1,780.3 million.

33. Reimbursement of troop- and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the periods up to 28 February 2011 and 30 June 2010, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

V. Observations

34. During the reporting period, the situation in the buffer zone remained calm. I am pleased to report that the overall number of military violations decreased further. I hope that the opposing forces, which have demonstrated overall good cooperation with UNFICYP, will respond positively to the mission's ongoing efforts to advance

discussions on military confidence-building measures, which would also contribute to the ongoing peace process.

35. Regrettably, restrictions on the movement of locally employed United Nations civilian personnel continue. The freedom of movement of all United Nations personnel is a matter of principle to the Organization and an operational requirement for UNFICYP, and I call upon the Turkish Cypriot authorities to respect this principle.

36. UNFICYP increasingly faces challenges by individuals, at times supported by the respective authorities; these challenges have led to incidents, potentially undermining the security situation and creating wider tensions between the communities. Such challenges to the authority of UNFICYP in the buffer zone undermine the mission's ability to assist in the return to normal conditions. Civilian activities in the buffer zone are a key component of the reconciliation process when managed in a manner that fosters trust and cooperation. I call on the respective authorities to provide their fullest support to ensure respect for UNFICYP in implementing its mandate.

37. Both communities continued to rely on UNFICYP assistance in areas ranging from humanitarian, religious, social and economic matters to a variety of bicommunal issues affecting the everyday lives of Cypriots. UNFICYP continued to work closely with the two communities on solving practical day-to-day issues. However, a number of incidents during the reporting period contributed to rising tensions that required intervention and mediation by UNFICYP. I call on all parties to encourage, in their words and actions, an atmosphere of restraint and mutual respect.

38. UNFICYP has been instrumental in facilitating cooperation between the sides and the implementation of measures in the fields of crime and criminal matters and cultural heritage. With regard to crime and criminal matters, I welcome the exchange of information between the sides as a significant contribution towards producing tangible results for the common security of all Cypriots. In the area of cultural heritage, it is important that all parties demonstrate their commitment to preserving the rich common heritage of Cyprus by supporting and facilitating the implementation of agreed measures.

39. I remain of the view that the establishment of economic, social, cultural, sporting or similar ties and contacts will have a positive impact on the ongoing negotiations. Such contacts nurture a sentiment of trust between the communities and help to address the concerns of isolation expressed by the Turkish Cypriots. Furthermore, greater economic and social parity between the sides will make the eventual reunification not only easier but also more likely. In the context of an internationally sanctioned peace process, efforts in the opposite direction can only be counterproductive.

40. I am pleased to report that the humanitarian work of the Committee on Missing Persons continues largely unhindered. I appeal to all parties to continue efforts to prevent the work of the Committee from being politicized. I once again continue to urge all parties to be more forthcoming in accommodating the Committee's exhumation requirements throughout the island, including in military areas in the north.

41. Since its inception in 2004 and thanks to predominantly European Union funding, the demining operation in the buffer zone has cleared 73 mined areas, or almost 11 square kilometres of land for productive use, and has destroyed more than 27,000 mines. I commend the efforts of all involved in this painstaking and hazardous work. At the same time, I am disappointed that the stated goal of a mine-free buffer zone cannot be achieved. The recent incident described in paragraph 8 underscores the continuing dangers posed by the mines in Cyprus, including in areas beyond the buffer zone. I call upon the parties to facilitate the removal of these enduring threats to safety. The United Nations stands ready to further assist the parties in their aspiration to achieve a mine-free Cyprus.

42. I am encouraged by the positive engagement of the parties with regard to future crossings. As we saw at Limnitis/Yeşilırmak in 2010 and Ledra Street/Lokmaçı, Nicosia, in 2008, such initiatives can improve overall confidence between the communities. I call on the parties to take a pragmatic and results-oriented approach, with a view to enabling further social and economic interaction between the two communities. It is now time to decide on opening the next crossing.

43. It is my firm belief that UNFICYP continues to play an important role on the island in maintaining calm and fostering bicommunal cooperation and trust. The mission also works closely with the Office of my Special Adviser and the United Nations agencies and programmes, which are actively engaged in promoting an atmosphere that is conducive to negotiations. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNFICYP for six months, until 15 December 2011.

44. In line with the requests of the Security Council, most recently in its resolution 1930 (2010), the Secretariat will remain engaged in contingency planning in relation to the settlement. The planning will continue in a flexible manner and will be guided by developments in the negotiations and the views of the parties on the possible role of the United Nations in this respect.

45. At the same time, mindful of the Security Council's previous calls and my stated intention to keep all peacekeeping operations under review, I shall continually keep the operations of UNFICYP under close review, taking into account developments on the ground and the views of the parties, and shall revert to the Council with recommendations, as appropriate, for further adjustments to the UNFICYP mandate, force levels and concept of operations as soon as warranted. As I informed the Council in my report dated 4 March 2011 (S/2011/112), preliminary internal discussions have begun with regard to my stated intention to conduct a broader assessment of the United Nations presence in Cyprus, with a view to recommending ways to further adjust to ongoing developments.

46. In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to my Special Representative and Chief of Mission, Lisa M. Buttenheim, and to Rear Admiral Mario César Sánchez Debernardi, the Force Commander of UNFICYP, who left the mission in December 2010. I also extend my appreciation to Major General Chao Liu, who assumed the position of Force Commander in February 2011, and to the men and women serving in UNFICYP for the efficiency and commitment with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.

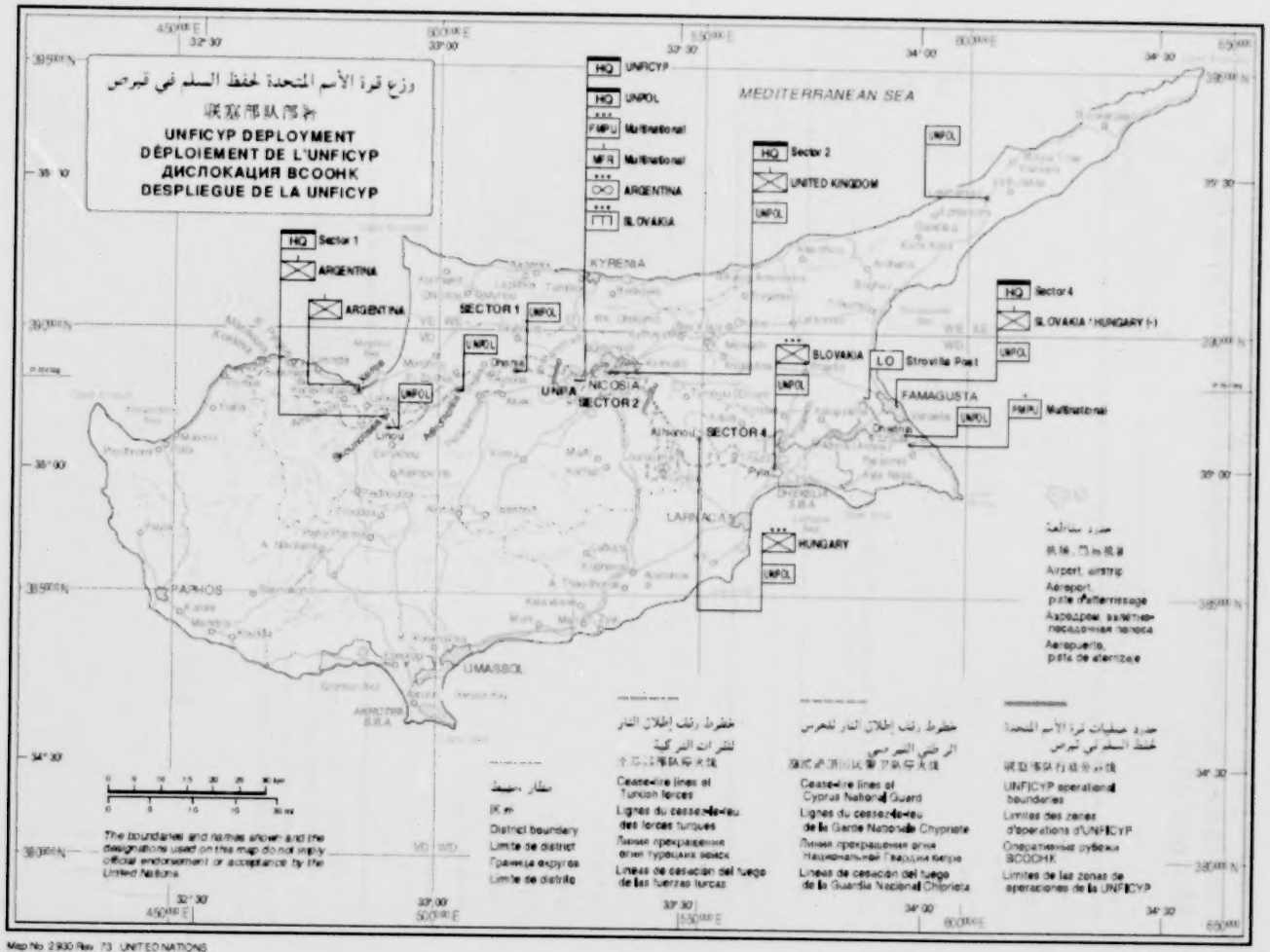
Annex

Countries providing military and police personnel to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (as at 30 April 2011)

Country	*Military personnel*
Argentina[a]	295
Austria	4
Canada	1
China[b]	2
Hungary[c]	84
Slovakia[d]	200
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	272
Total	**858**

Country	*United Nations police*
Australia	15
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5
Croatia	4
El Salvador	4
India	7
Ireland	18
Italy	4
Montenegro	4
Ukraine	4
Total	**65**

[a] Includes soldiers from Chile (15), Paraguay (14) and Brazil (1).
[b] China is using one vacant Canadian and one British post at UNFICYP headquarters.
[c] Includes soldiers from Serbia (6).
[d] Includes soldiers from Croatia (2).



Map No. 2930 Rev. 73 UNITED NATIONS
May 2011

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